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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 000446

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SUBJECT: Somalia - Tour d'Horizon with the Prime Minister

REF: Nairobi 409

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Somalia's Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein offered his perspectives on establishing security in Mogadishu, reconciliation, training troops, selecting ministers, and focusing on transitional tasks during a February 8 lunch meeting. The Prime Minister reviewed many of the same themes highlighted by the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information, Youth and Sports during meetings on February 7 and 8. The Prime Minister and his key cabinet members articulated their vision on the next steps and how to strengthen the Transitional Federal Institutions to create an environment where reconciliation and peace are possible. End Summary.

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The Public is Not Our Enemy  
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12. (SBU) On February 8, the Special Envoy met extensively with Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein in Nairobi. The Prime Minister had just arrived from Addis where he had met with President Abdullahi Yusuf. (Note: We were told by one of Hussein's assistants that he and Yusuf met for at least seven hours total during their time together. He did not tell us any details of the discussions, but mentioned that they were "still on the same page."). Also on February 8, we met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ali Ahmed Jama Jangili and on February 7 with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Youth and Sports Ahmed Abdisalam Adan. The Special Envoy met again with the Prime Minister and several of his staff during a larger February 9 meeting with UN officials and members of the donor community. The representatives of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government were transiting Nairobi from the AU Summit on their way to Brussels for meetings with the European Community.

13. (C) Prime Minister Hussein told us he continues to lead an "all inclusive" reconciliation process. He said, "We are prepared to discuss with everybody and will meet with the opposition where they are. The only exclusions are those individuals who are formally listed as international terrorists. We are not excluding the Shabaab as a whole." The Prime Minister described the series of meetings in Mogadishu where he was actively engaged in discussions with representatives from a wide range of groups. Deputy Prime Minister Abdisalam told us pointedly that in the past, "the public were considered as enemies." He emphasized that following the lead of the Prime Minister, the cabinet now is working in specific "hot spots," trying to help the people "shed their baggage of animosity and mistrust." Through this process, the TFG is trying to broker local agreements, working on reconciliation from the ground up, rather than addressing reconciliation on a national scale.

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Security Through Reconciliation  
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¶4. (C) The Prime Minister noted that getting the Ethiopians out of Somalia is a shared goal of all parties. Abdisalam said, "Only Ethiopia unites the opposition groups." In his outreach, PM Hussein said he is emphasizing the critical link between reconciliation and the withdrawal of Ethiopia. The Prime Minister confirmed that Ethiopia pulled back its troops in Mogadishu at his request. "When offering reconciliation, you have to be perceived as strong", Hussein said. Abdisalam told us, "The Ethiopians are looking for a way out and we want to put our own institution on the ground. Somalis have to find the solution" The Prime Minister said that in going forward, he plans to base a security plan for Mogadishu on discussions with the military and police.

¶5. (C) Abdisalam stated that at present, "There are no TFG forces -- only militias associated with various individuals. There is a breakdown of command, resulting in troops not responding to orders, some of whom are robbing the public." The cabinet leaders all emphasized that addressing the security situation is the most critical task now facing the TFG. Prime Minister Hussein emphasized his two-pronged approach: first, focusing on AMISOM and pushing forward with the "not so easy" tasks of getting troop contributions, and second, strengthening the Somali capacity to ensure security. The Prime Minister identified the training of military and police in Ethiopia as key to the medium and long term goal of enhanced Somali capacity.

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Ethiopian Training Fosters Nationalism  
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¶6. (C) Foreign Minister Jangili described the current training program for Somali security forces in Ethiopia. He said that he, the Prime Minister, and others who were in Addis for the AU Summit had

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the opportunity to travel to the training location to visit the Somali troops. (Note: Neither Jangili nor the Prime Minister specified where the troops were being trained, but said it was a remote location somewhere in the south of Ethiopia.). Jangili described a very positive program where young, fit soldiers recruited from all of the clans were participating in a six month training program. Because the rigorous training is far from their usual environments with the khat and negative influences that characterize them, the troops have undergone "a wonderful transformation." They are more disciplined and have bonded. Singing patriotic songs, they are forging a collective national identity. "The clans have molded into one army," Jangili claimed.

¶7. (C) Jangili told us the 650 "special forces" who have completed the training are "doing great." As Somalis many they are familiar with the environment and can carry out missions that would be impossible for Ethiopian troops unfamiliar with the environment, he reasoned. Jangili said the special forces have already carried out several successful missions against the Shabaab. The Foreign Minister approximated that a total of 1,200 police and 1,200 military are to be trained. Prime Minister Hussein told us he is "totally comfortable with the training" and looks forward to the troops return to create a properly organized structure and command for Somalia's security forces.

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Engaging the Business Community  
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¶8. (C) The Prime Minister emphasized the positive role that the business community can play in the reconciliation process and asked the Special Envoy to tell him more about the recent meeting in Dubai. When the cabinet arrived in Mogadishu, Abdisalam told us that the business community was at his office the same afternoon. The Deputy Prime Minister remarked that Mogadishu's business community is the most organized of all the groups; presenting concerns, what they hope to achieve, and what they want from the government. "Bakara market has become the latest test of wills and the Prime Minister is actively involved in brokering peace between militias, security forces, and businessmen," he said. Abdisalam described a joint

committee that was being established to monitor security in Mogadishu.

¶9. (SBU) The Prime Minister described an economic environment that is being hampered by insecurity. Hussein said that changes in the inflation rate have been historically associated with the formation of cabinets and other political events. However, lack of formal economic indicators makes it difficult to enact any fiscal policies, he explained. The TFG is trying to address inflation, counterfeit currency, and other economic issues, but does not have the capacity to do so. Prime Minister Hussein asked for our assistance in reactivating Somali membership in the IMF and the World Bank as the first step in securing some of the expertise to address financial issues. Hussein indicated that he is considering a stop in Dubai to meet with the business community on his way back to Mogadishu from Brussels. All of the ministers discussed the importance of engaging the Diaspora.

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Next Steps  
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¶10. (SBU) The Prime Minister assured us, "our priorities are linked to the transitional tasks [set forth in the Transitional Federal Charter]. We are very much committed to fulfilling these tasks, which will be the measure of our success." The Prime Minister said they are focused on the "Five Pillars" he introduced in his address to Parliament. Hussein said that the first draft of the constitution would be ready in July and they need to do consultations with the public. (Comment: Although we had heard of the July target date, it is unclear what consultative process has been initiated to prepare this draft. End Comment). Other tasks included:

- reconciliation accompanied by security
- explaining the federal system to the public
- strengthening local administrations
- making operational national financial institutions
- creating commissions, including an electoral committee.

In fulfilling these tasks, Hussein said they had wanted to move outside of the 4.5 Formula and toward a model of "one person, one vote."

¶11. (SBU) The Special Envoy asked the Prime Minister when he planned to appoint the final three ministers in his cabinet. Although he did not offer a specific date, the Prime Minister said that the delay was being caused by sub-clans who had not yet decided upon their candidates. Instead of waiting for them to do so, he named the first fifteen ministers. Through the selection process, Hussein said he is "stepping away from clanism." He also said that there should be

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space for at least one, maybe two, additional women as nominees.

¶12. (SBU) The Prime Minister discussed the proposal for the 6-month "minimum package" for support (reftel). He voiced his concern over having more direct management of the funds by UNDP in Nairobi. He asked for our support in placing a technical specialist inside the Ministry of Finance who could administer the funds and strengthen the institutional systems. The Prime Minister argued that having programs in Somalia and administration in Nairobi would "result in delays that will kill the TFG." His preference is for all funds to move through the Somali Central Bank, ensuring transparency and bringing fund administration closer to the end user. (Note: We understand that at the February 9 meeting with donors, the proposal was agreed upon as drafted.)

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Comment  
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¶13. (C) In his measured tone and quiet manner, the Prime Minister was clear about the priorities of the Transitional Federal Government. He indicated his intention to return to Mogadishu as soon as possible (after his trip to Brussels February 11-12) to continue the reconciliation process he initiated. Reiterating his intention to dialogue with "anybody" and "meet with the opposition where they are," the message remains the same even after his

discussions with President Yusuf. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were both on message, reinforcing the Prime Minister and the priorities of the TFG. The relationship with Ethiopia is solid, according to the Prime Minister. In its public presentation, the TFG is unified, speaking to its constituents, and even engaging with the media to get its message out. All of these signs are positive for Prime Minister Hussein, and at least for the moment, President Yusuf appears to be prepared to let his Prime Minister take the lead. End Comment.

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